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AUTHOR Wagstaff, Suzanne
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ABSTRACT

Experiences of a San Francisco, California, kindergarten teacher whose students include 15 limited English speaking children are recounted, and observations on English Language Development (ELD) teaching strategies are offered. It is noted that the kindergarten program and classroom setting are both conducive to and appropriate for second language acquisition. The use of a sheltered English approach in an ELD classroom, which integrates English as a Second Language and encourages language acquisition in a comfortable atmosphere with an element of fun, is discussed. Various ways that ELD teachers can build language skills are described, including natural approaches, cultural approaches, the use of holiday events, and integrated curriculum and theme approaches. Age-appropriate activities, other classroom approaches, San Francisco Unified School District programs, and an assessment of the program are also discussed. Contains 54 references. (LB)

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TEACHING ESL TO THE YOUNG LEP CHILD

IN AN INNER CITY SCHOOL

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Demographically, California has an ever increasing diversity of ethnic and cultural immigrants. Of all the immigrants to the U.S., one in four arrives to settle in California. Consequently, along with that statistic is the fact that one in four students enters the California school system as a NES (Non English Speaking) student. A 1988 projection by the State Department of Education predicted that by the year 2000, 15% of all students in the state's school system will enter school as NES students.

The large cosmopolitan San Francisco Unified School District, in their 1990 publication of "Faces of Education", reports that 48% of the SFUSD students have home languages other than English with Cantonese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Tagalog being strongly represented. While many of these students can speak varying degrees of English, others are identified as LEP (Limited English Proficient) and need special instruction in learning to read and write English.

At my particular school site, our 1990-'91 enrollment shows an increase of NES students over last year's enrollment: a pattern that has been evident the past ten years. In my kindergarten class there are 50% more NES students that I had two years ago. These students who entered school in September as NES are now considered LEP and because there are fifteen such kindergarteners, this group is designated as an ELD class (English Language Development) and I have been asked to be their ELD teacher.

This little group consists of seven Cantonese-speaking, two speakers of Tagalog, one Spanish, one Urdu (Pakistan) and one youngster who is learning English as his third language since he

speaks both Islam and Cantonese at home. Additionally, there are three youngsters, born in Russia, Laos and the Philipines who seem to have proficiency in both their home languages and English to qualify them as being "exited" from requiring formal additional ESL instruction.

The kindergarten program and classroom setting are both very conducive to and appropriate for second language acquisition. The approach to instruction with use of gestures for young children, the over-emphasis given to oral directions, the slow instructional pace to allow for readiness at all levels, the use of manipulatives: all are perfect for the natural approach to English as an accompaniment to natural language acquisition.

Sheltered English Instruction

Strategies of sheltered English instruction are used in an ELD class. Such a class is one in which the students are instructed with approaches that help LEP students learn content while learning English. In the kindergarten class the "content" is such as to allow for learning the things of everyday life: the names of familiar objects, socialization skills, and following directions.

Sheltered English is actually a teaching strategy which assists LEP youngsters in learning and acquiring English. It is also an integrated form of ESL in which the LEP child is acquiring English in content areas along with the rest of his/her classmates by being exposed to the same instruction. The purpose of this sheltered English strategy, which becomes more evident above the kindergarten level, is to make the core curriculum available to all the LEP students, to boost the English language acquisition potential, and to develop the student's self-esteem. It is the purpose of this sheltered English approach to "shelter" the LEP student from unrealistic expectations, traditional assessments (of paper and pencil), abstract instruction, lecture-type instruction and similiar out-moded teaching techniques.

The value of such a sheltered English approach, which integrates ESL, is that it encourages English language acquisition in a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere while encouraging the young child to verbally respond when ready to do so.

Along with this, in the kindergarten setting, there should be an element of fun in approaching learning through hands-on exploration. As Terrell (1977) says: not a single classroom hour should go by without some activity which is undertaken for the pure sake of enjoyment.

The guide lines outlined by Stephen Cary in his Sheltered English Training Guide for teachers of LEP students is similiar to kindergarten expectations of teachers who understand developmentally age-appropriate instruction. The aspect of "sheltered" is to incorporate several modes of instruction (as in an integrated curriculum and teaching to all five senses). Modes of "sheltered" would include the use of manipulatives, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, language partners, use of visuals, gestures, mime and drama, instructional aide assistance, and above all a trusting environment: all to empower the youngster's ability to learn English.

In a sheltered English class, students should be talking and interacting, working in small groups, doing hands-on free exploration, assisting each other, doing cooperative activities and should evidence enthusiasm and happiness in their learning environment. The curriculum should be interesting, age-appropriate, building on prior knowledge and should include validation and celebration of cultural and ethnic diversities.

English Language Development

The target language input must be comprehensible to the learner since the student's ability to organize the new language system depends on how well they can understand what they learn. While still in the early learning stages of acquiring the new language, they know few words and consequently need to see the

meaning of what they hear which enforces the need for the "here and now " activities. (Terrell, 1977).

ELD (English Language Development), at the kindergarten level, should be natural in approach, build vocabulary in content, go from manipulative and concrete; with clear, distinct explanations accompanied by demonstrations: talking at a slow but normal rate, checking frequently for comprehension, and using realia constantly to encourage vocabulary development. The kindergarten and ESL curriculum should be relevant, age-appropriate for the child's level while respecting previous knowledge; student-centered, stimulating, and should incorporate cultural awareness as a bridge between home and school and country of origin to their new live-in country culture.

The ELD teacher needs to read aloud frequently to the students sharing the pictures and related materials with the whole group; provide sufficient reflective time, summarize frequently, assess student's progress informally and maintain high but reasonable expectations. A very effective procedure is the formula: ST^2D of Stephen Cary's (1989). This formula refers to: "Show, Tell & Try, and Do!"

Signs of a successful program, are noticing the youngsters working, sharing, and helping each other, showing more interest in the activities of their school day and demonstrating that they are more comfortable with their peers and the school environment.

To be required to initiate an ELD program within one's existing class is both challenging and frightening: because of my strong need to make these youngsters feel comfortable, completely accepted, and to help them acquire a second language.

In the materials I have been studying, it is definitely apparent that the teacher-training for preparedness to teach the ELD (English Language Development) class is essential. The goals of the district in their teacher-training program include: to aid the teacher in more effectively meeting the needs of their LEP students, awareness of the second language acquisition process,

to have a knowledge of the relationship between first and second language acquisition, to realize the role of the teacher in enpowering the students toward English acquisition and how to identify the different stages of language acquisition.

The most effectual method seems to be an interdisciplinary approach with a validation of cultures and customs and one which is rich in oral language experiences. An interdisciplinary approach assumes that the teacher has knowledge and understanding of social history, a concept of social values and an updated knowledge of social change especially as regards the community where they are teaching.

How much an LEP student will learn is dependent upon the student's prior knowledge, the student's English proficiency and how comprehensible the teacher makes the lesson. It is imperative that the teacher allow for listening and assimilation, even more so for this group of young children; respecting their space and their time to adjust as they are placed in this "foreign" sounding place: and especially so if this is the child's first "break" from home. It could take a couple of months time to feel comfortable. During this adjustment time acquisition type activities should be provided to develop communicative abilities such as working together in pairs or in a small group in constructing with blocks or leggos, etc.. Working together on puzzles and role-playing in the playhouse or the classroom store and the puppet show almost "force" communication to happen.

Case in point: a little Vietnamese boy who had never left Mom or home before arriving at kindergarten while the large majority of his peers had already been in pre-school, pre-K or some other type of four-year old program. It took all of September and most of October before he was comfortable enough to join in with his peers. He would sit on the edge of the rug for weeks just watching his peers playing with the blocks. Eventually his moving closer to the center of the rug resulted in joining the activity and he was participating and having a good time. At no time did I ever force him: he was encouraged and invited and his

peers seemed to pick up on my attitude and it was acceptable to them to see Nam sitting there observing and getting ready.

Each month the youngsters seemed more comfortable in the full classroom setting. Fortunately, I feel, they did have their thirty minute pull-out ESL program each day where they went in a group of six to a smaller room with an ESL aide. It definitely gave them a "place" where they felt comfortable to experiment with beginning English without a full class witnessing their initial attempts. I truly feel they gained quantities of self-confidence in that "sheltered" experience. By December all our ESL kindergarteners were well on the road to English acquisition and speaking words, phrases and, in some cases, even sentences. Youngsters learn a great deal from each other, too, if we just let them.

Language Acquisition

Language acquisiton refers to development of language proficiency without recourse to rules while the actual learning of a language refers to the development of language proficiency through a conscious knowledge of language rules. (Krashen, 1983; Terrell, 1983). Acquisition is natural for the young child as he/she becomes interested in what is going on with his/her peers and starts to naturally join in with them in the social setting of the learning environment. Acquisition is a subconscious process which the learner is not aware of because the focus is on communication. (Krashen, 1983).

During all of this acquisition the teacher should not correct responses as grammar will come later. Grammar is caught: it is not taught. (Donoghue, 1979). Children learn by immitation so consequently the teacher must be a good role-model for correct English. The correct grammar part comes along with listening and practicing and repeating what is said and how it is said. (Fromkin & Rodman, 1983).

How much and how quickly an LEP student will learn is dependent upon the student's prior knowledge and how comprehensibly

the new language is presented. A student's eventual proficiency in English depends largely on the degree of literacy attained in their primary language. If there is little support for the primary language development in the home, or at school, the LEP student will probably never progress beyond rudimentary conversational skills in any language.(California Bilingual Handbook, 1990).

The term LEP refers to "limited English proficiency" but also refers to a broad range of linguistic ability that extends from no knowledge of English to having some English language skills, but not enough to fully participate in an all-English setting. An LEP student can be of any age, any background or at any academic level. The only characteristic they share is a measurable limitation in English proficiency. (Cochran, 1989).

The common main objective in all ESL, LEP, and ELD programs is to aid the student in acquiring the target language: in this case, English; thus to empower the student by developing self-esteem culturally, socially and academically.

There are definite stages of second language acquisition and these stages are the same for a native speaker learning their own language and how to speak it. The stages are five:

pre-production, the receptive stage;

early production, mastering common and frequent patterns;

speech emergence, words and simple sentences are mastered;

intermediate fluency, where the child will master information they use most; and,

natural fluency or language mastery, when the child has the language ability equal to a child or adult of that age or educational background.

At this fifth, and final stage, the student is said to be ready to make the transition into a classroom that is using sheltered approaches or to a classroom where English is the main language of instruction.

The Natural Approach

Many writers on second language acquisition, including

Terrell and Krashen, favor the natural approach to second language acquisiton. In the natural approach, which is based on acquiring communication skills, the teacher needs to provide a language-rich environment where the students are verbally receiving what they can comprehend in a low anxiety setting. This type of situation allows the child to feel comfortable and encourages a natural speak-when-ready response.

It is clearly obvious from watching children, that second language learners naturally begin by listening; then they respond non-verbally or in their own language, and finally they start producing the new target language.

While learning to communicate in the new language and following upon the pre-speech or silent period, the youngsters naturally acquire the vocabulary they need in three stages; survival communication skills ("That's mine!"); extended communication ("Want to make a house with me?"); and language for classroom purposes (as in responding to questions and taking part in discussions) which seem to start with one-word responses, advance to phrases and sentences as confidence builds.

To encourage the natural language approach teachers should provide environments full of language development opportunities. The children should be treated as if they are conversationalists even if they have not chosen verbal communication yet. They are watching, taking in and remembering as long as they are being spoken to. Understanding every child's culture and language or dialect validates the importance of all communication. It reflects the identities, values, and experiences of the child's family and community. (Genishi, 1988).

Several speech modification techniques have been suggested for teachers of LEP students. Most of the suggestions are or should already be a part of a kindergarten teacher's repertoire for age-appropriate instruction: using specific names in place of pronouns, taking longer pauses or natural breaks in verbal direc-

tions, exaggerated intonation accompanied by body language and movement, use of higher frequency words and avoiding the use of idioms and slang. (Terrell, 1977; Cary, 1989).

Other guidelines for working with ESL students (from the SFUSD ESL Curriculum Guide, K-5), include modeling by the teacher and TPR (Total Physical Response). In this example the teacher gives a new direction or action: describes it, models the action and asks the student to do the same: eg. "Put some water in the cup!"

Heterogeneous grouping for activities greatly benefits ESL students. Having a classroom library with picture books and a listening center with read-a-long tapes are other helpful language development aids.

Language experience charts, class dictated stories and books made in small groups, with stories which can be repeated by the group in class readings emphasize the importance of language. The language skills learned in the classroom give the student direct access to the literature, the culture and the customs of his or her new live-in country. (Donoghue, 1979).

Cultural Approach to Language Acquisition

It is of paramount importance that the teacher of a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic class be able to respond positively to the diversity of behaviors involved in the cross cultural environment and to be able to share the cultures of the class members with each other assisting the youngsters in sharing their identification and pride in their mother cultures. (Donoghue, 1979). It is also essential to incorporate activities, materials, literature, and other visuals to help make the various cultures and customs come alive for the children both to validate and share the culture and history of the children's ancestry and to do the same with the history and culture of their new country so all are learning and sharing experiences. Teachers should also keep up on the recent literature and research in education

pertaining to immigrant cultures entering our school districts and be knowledgeable and prepared to meet them with understanding.

When teaching language to youngsters we need to focus on the teaching of cultural awareness through an interdisciplinary approach. (Seelye, 1974). While LEP students are becoming acquainted with their new surroundings and while they are in the listening stages of acquiring this new English language, it is the perfect time to concentrate on multi-cultural awareness for the whole class. At the kindergarten age, while learning is hands-on and exploratory, what a perfect time to also learn about each other's cultures and backgrounds while setting a positive and accepting environment by validating every child's culture. The Inner City Schools are rich with multi-cultural and multilingual students. Recognition and validation and total acceptance should be extended to all students, their families and their backgrounds. Following both the school and calendar year giving emphasis to all cultural events as they occur is a natural way to give proper recognition and appreciation. Every child has something to share with their peers. Every family has customs to share thereby creating an accepting and comfortable setting in which all may learn together.

The central purpose of multicultural education is to foster understanding of the diversity of human groups and to cultivate appreciation for the uniqueness of each person as well as the needs that all humans share. (Fromberg, 1987). Early in the school year is a perfect time for unifying themes which cross all cultures and which help provide a comfortable belonging for all students. Such themes could include: bread, corn, rice, peace and love. Good children's literature provides excellent introductions to these themes and accompanying acitivities.

Dramatization of children's books read to the class such as The Little Red Hen and Caps For Sale, is another excellent way to break the ice and draw every child into wanting to participate

and contribute to the unifying of the group into a "family" unit.

Capitalizing on Events

November, with the American custom of Thanksgiving, is another wonderful opportunity to give positive recognition to all ethnic groups and all cultural customs. Again, literature provides a starting point with All of Us Come Across the Water, How Many Days to America and Molly's Pilgrim. The third book is about a Russian immigrant family and the pilgrim doll the mother makes for her daughter to bring to school to show that pilgrims are from all countries. I used this theme with my class this year to show how all of our families were pilgrims at some point in time. We then talked about their lands of origin. Even at the kindergarten level, this approach was warmly and positively received as I validated and talked about their backgrounds which they did not think I knew about.

In studying and sharing cultures there are three considerations: "what" things are visible in a culture; "how" members of the culture behave; and, "why" their values effect the "what" and "how" of their behavior. (Fromberg, 1987).

By starting with activities that start and build upon a previous date-base, experiences which the child can relate to their own life, then they can branch out to the experiences of their peers and the differences they may see there.

Following along in the school year leads to December which again is a month full of cultural delights to share among the classmates. Hanukkah brings the festival of lights and driedels and menorahs to make in class; the Afro-American celebration of Kwanza; Christmas customs from around the world with varied uses of trees, shoes, stockings, pinatas in addition to all the books on these customs which should be read to and shared with the youngsters.

January brings the traditional New Year as celebrated in

our country of America but consideration must be given to those cultures who start their New Year at a different time of the year. This provides a good lesson in comparison of the same kind of celebration but observed in a different way.

Since young children often acquire multi-cultural information, attitudes, values, and skills in their daily lives teachers can intervene by highlighting aspects of children's exposures by contrasting and comparing this information. It is important to help children to classify data without the pressure of a single "correct" answer and to encourage children to raise questions so as to enable them to make their own connections and conclusions. (Fromberg, 1987).

Many cultural activities are shared during the month of February. The Chinese Lunar New Year provided the opportunity to make red envelopes, dragon puppets and Chinese Lunar Calendars after reading explanations of these customs. Also, this month we had the Vietnamese celebration of TET and their Year of the Goat. References to and sharing of different types of foods can also be incorporated into the units where feasible and appropriate.

Valentine's Day, or as I call it with my youngsters, Friendship Day, provides the sharing of a custom in this country. Black History Month, also in February, allows for the wonderful sharing of accomplishments of numerous Black Americans.

In our district this year, in March, we had two weeks of African Focus which I again introduced with literature: legends of West, South and East Africa. We shared the legends, discussed the beautiful and colorful art work in many of the books and provided opportunities for the youngsters to try their hand at African-type art.

World Languages Week also came in March and we made a bulletin board: "Languages of Room 106" and listed all languages spoken in the student's homes and showed the countries of origin. All of this sharing gives constant positive recognition to each and every student showing how important each and every child is

regardless of land of birth, color of skin, language spoken, culture adhered to and/or customs practiced.

Irish and Irish-American customs were also shared and discussed in March. Where appropriate, as in the African Focus Week and for Saint Patrick's Day in March, and for several other observations; listening to the music and learning the songs and poems to accompany the celebration are taught. Art and music and dance are integral parts of cultural celebrations and should be shared to give a total experience.

The seasons of the year also lend to a sharing of various customs in addition to the observation of national holidays which teach the children new to this country the history of their new land. March-April brings to light still another difference yet a similarity: there is Passover, Easter and Eastern Orthodox Easter and the arrival of Spring. Recognition of similiar feasts/celebrations/observations on different days by various groups but in similar ways. All equally important and of meaningful significance.

We need to provide activities that the children can relate to their own experiences. (Fromberg, 1987). This is why I have concentrated so heavily on a cultural approach in my kindergarten classroom. In addition to sharing so many rich experiences with each other, the approach helps the LEP students to be proud of who they are and helps them feel more comfortable and accepted: all of which is essential before they will feel compelled to speak up in their new language.

The month of May brings May Day celebrations: another time to contrast the different observations world-wide. Cinco de Mayo provides for sharing of music, customs, dance and foods followed by Mother's Day observation.

It is not intended to use a calendar base solely but as an introduction to important events. These cultural events are not just given recognition on certain days but are used as a means to create a total cultural awareness. All of these events, celebrations, holidays, are treated with respect and dignity. This

approach is eminently appropriate for young children's learning to create a community among many different ethnic groups. Careful and thoughtful planning is the responsibility of the teacher so that the children all share in the importance of each event. A more in-depth study is, of course, required for older children.

Integrated Curriculum/Theme Approach

Many writers about second language acquisition and the natural approach to learning a second language agree that integrated curriculum and the "theme approach" are an excellent approach to teaching English as the second language because all subjects are joined together in a meaningful topic approach. (Terrell, 1983; Krashen, 1983; Cummins, 1986; Cary, 1989).

Our school just completed an "Oceans Experience" which was really to be an Oceans Week. The entire school participated and every subject was geared to the oceans theme. Most classes started before the designated week providing the appropriate classroom atmosphere before the starting date. Teachers team-taught; classes intermingled with other classes; the older students shared their projects with the younger classes; and, an all-school mural was created with all classes contributing.

The kindergarten ELD group, in addition to participating with their whole class in all of the oceans activities and art projects, also created a culminating art project which for them, reviewed their colors and knowledge of sea creatures. The children then shared their special project with both kindergarten classes and displayed the art work in the classroom windows for all to see and share. Experience like these are unifying and give all the children a chance to share and exchange ideas in a non-threatening atmosphere. Similiar themes are effective in the classroom and again literature provides excellent spring-boards for such themes.

An aid in planning an integrated curriculum theme approach as recommended by the SFUSD Bilingual Department for instructing the ELD class is the Sheltered English Lesson Planning Wheel.

This includes an eight-step approach: select a theme, plan to determine objectives, diagnose where the learners are in relation to the objectives, set the stage for a broad approach to the topic, teach and review the vocabulary by developing word banks, teach by merging the content and vocabulary, provide guided practice by again combining content and language and finally, evaluate the performance observed to determine whether to move on or remain and practive.

Age-appropriate Activities

For the kindergartner, all learning must be purposeful and and designed to elicit constant attention and participation throughout each relatively short lesson. (Donoghue, 1979). All activities and materials should reflect the children's mode of learning and their natural egocentric approach to life. Experiences should be authentic. Start where the children are and with what is meaningful to the kindergarten child. Concentrate on their interests: their family, school, child care and so on moving on out from their center as the child's interests broaden. This approach is age-appropriate for the child learning English for the first time as well as for his/her peers who are already learning more English as their first language. This is to relate child growth and development to the process of language learning.

The child's self-concept is closely tied to his or her home language and culture. Therefore the teacher must take advantage of all opportunities to build on this self-concept by developing and contributing to the child's self-esteem. Validating and sharing cultures is the place to start.

Hands-on visuals are appropriate for LEP kindergarteners to help them learn the English name-words for familiar people and objects in their everyday life: relatives, community helpers, colors, shapes, home objects, school things, fruits, vegetables, number names, clothes, body parts and animal names. These name words are included in the lessons for LEP students in ELD classes

in the Carousel of Ideas program suggested for use in our district. The Stages of Language Acquisition as presented in this program and which correlate quite well with the language acquisition and the natural approach writers such as Terrell and Carey include: Level I as Pre-Production and Production; Levels II, III and IV with Pre- Early and Speech Emergence; and Levels V - VIII including all of the previous stages plus Intermediate Fluency. For the kindergartner, levels I through IV are considered with most of the concentration and performance being at Levels I through III.

Other Classroom Approaches

"Getting Acquainted" and "Setting the Stage" are two other procedures I have used with my second language learners. In the beginning of the year, when the whole class was first introduced to the different classroom stations, our NES youngsters were unable to understand what was being explained and were not yet ready to choose such activities as the puppet show and the playhouse areas. Later in the year, after becoming more comfortable in the classroom setting and in their language expression, it seemed logical to meet with the fifteen of them right in the playhouse and the puppet show areas. This provided a comfortable setting and a getting acquainted with the play-things there and learning the names of these objects. After being there together they were then able to select it for a place they wanted to play in.

"Setting the Stage " is using drama with props so that the youngsters at first could "hide behind" puppets and hats and other props until they gained their own self-confidence and could act out on their own without the aid of props.

Songs and rhymes and class recitations are other naturally age-appropriate approaches to comfortable language expression.

District Programs for ESL

For the young NES child entering the San Francisco Unified

School System, the transition from one culture to another is made easier through the Intake Centers. The Intake Center provides assessments, registration and school assignments which may be a referral to a new-comers center which include: the Chinese Education Center, the Filipino Education Center or the Mission (Spanish) Education Center. The primary goal of these Bilingual Education Programs is to develop the English skills of students while continuing their academic growth so that they are able to participate fully in the District's instructional programs.

In our school we have a daily pull-out ESL program in which the youngsters learning English are taken to a smaller room, in a group of six students, with an ESL aide for instruction in English.

Three times a week, the Chinese students meet with a Cantonese-speaking aide. This may be done as a pull-out program, or as I prefer and is done with my kindergartners, they may work in the classroom at a table area. This involves seven students and they are taught the English words for the pictures in their books.

Another aspect of the Bilingual Education Program, and one which is very helpful to teachers, is the Core Curriculum Guide for Grades K-5. Within this guide are the ESL Learner Standards for the naturally developmental approach through listening, speaking, reading and writing. For the kindergarten level, the listening objectives are to help the student to focus attention on the speaker and the materials being used, to follow simple one and two step directions, distinguish between fantasy and reality in orally presented information, respond to story-telling and story reading by drawing and/or drama, identify environmental sounds and to develop an appreciation for and an ability to repeat simple song, poems and chants.

After respecting the "silent period" of each NES student, and when the child shows a readiness to start speaking in English, the teacher is encouraged to aid the student to repeat simple words and phrases, answer questions with short reponses, participate in

simple conversations, give directions to peers, repeat poems and rhymes and respond to predictable stories.

Objectives for pre-reading and early reading include participation in voluntary class choral recitations from language experience charts and stories, develop an appreciation for and recognition of rhyme and rhythm, become acquainted with a variety of multicultural literary works, select books for enjoyment and contribute to their appreciation of various forms or literature.

"Writing" at this level, in kindergarten, while still learning letter names and how to print, can and should include dictation of the children's own stories. The important thing is to recognize that written language is putting down the spoken word and reading their own stories back to them following the dictation. Included here are also their drawn pictures which tell a story.

All of these skills are be presented in a developmental way, not a remedial way. The instruction should be smoothly sequential and children's previous knowledge should never be repressed but constantly built upon and expanded. We can help children become more comfortable in more than one language and culture by developing their flexibility as well as their competence. The multicultural life of the child is thus enriched rather than diminished. (Saracho & Spodek, 1983).

The district also has a new approach to teacher-inservice which promises to be very effective. Staff Development Models in the form of video training packets for district designation have been developed by the Bilingual Education Department to better prepare the teachers involved in teaching ESL, Sheltered English and ELD classes. This 1990 training program , Sheltered English approach includes a video for teacher training, a materials and activities section , and a self-check section for responses to the video presentation. The value of this approach is that the teacher may take it home and use it at one's own pace and convenience.

Summary Comments

To summarize, effective ESL instruction is characterized by high levels of comprehensibility: low-anxiety situations, content appropriate to the student's developmental level, a primary focus on meaning as opposed to grammatical correctedness, lessons that reflect the student's needs, interests, and life experiences; and the negotiation of meaning in English between student and teacher. (California Bilingual Education Handbook, 1990). Additionally, since the primary objective of multicultural education is to affirm cultural diversity by correcting stereotypes, myths, omissions, and distortions by providing accurate accounts of cultural groups as viable entities in American society, it is therefore imperative that an effective ESL/ELD program be implemented and woven into the multi-cultural approach. (Saracho & Spodek, 1983).

The most positive approach to multicultural education is one where emphasis on single cultures is replaced by the multi-ethnic orientation using several instructional strategies selected for their appropriateness depending on the developmental level of the children in the group. (Saracho & Spondek, 1983).

Within all the classroom approaches and along with all methods must be the underlying validation of the student and his/her family. To validate and celebrate the cultural diversity within our classroom is to extend that recognition over to our meetings, both casual and formal, with the parents of the youngsters. When it is time for parent-teacher conferences, we must be sure to make the meeting a comfortable and non-threatening occasion. It is up to the teacher to find out if an interpreter is needed or not. The effectiveness of what we are trying to accomplish in the classroom will lose its validity if we neglect to extend it to the families of our students.

Program Assessment

It is probably difficult to purely assess this group of LEP

students within my kindergarten class as they have received language assistance from more than one source this year. I can strongly verify that all of these fifteen youngsters are definitely more comfortable in their school setting than they were in September. They are all speaking English, working and sharing with all of their peers (not just the ones who receive formal ESL instruction with them) and all except two are right on target for learning the kindergarten skills appropriate for this time of year. I truly believe that most of what these LEP students learned in the early part of the year was from their pull-out daily thirty-minute ESL instruction. As the year progressed they learned from many sources: each other, their first English language peers and the full classroom situation augmented by the ELD instructions. In the pull-out ESL program the youngsters received excellent and understanding support with appropriate materials and instruction in a comfortable and non-threatening environment and they progressed beautifully in their English language acquisition.

The ELD strategies I was asked to start implementing were slow in getting formally started although many of the strategies were natural enough as they are already a part of the age-appropriate approaches for the kindergarten level. There are always difficulties in new and added responsibilities and added accountability. There was the problem of thirty-one children without the help of an aide to free the teacher to be with the fifteen designated ELD students.

When a student teacher was present, and after the student teacher's initial adjustment to the whole class, the teacher was then able to meet separately with the ELD students. Several lessons were extremely effective and all were received well by the students.

I truly believe that children, especially at this young age, learn so much from each other. I believe that it was the total program of learning from so many sources that culminated in the development of self-esteem and English proficiency which I am

now seeing in these children.

For next year, regardless of cutbacks, I will definitely continue the cultural approach to sharing and understanding among my inner city students of diverse cultural and ethnic backgounds. Whether I will still be requested to be an ELD teacher at the kindergarten level will depend upon our enrollment in September but noting the trend it will probably be similiar. With the imminent cut-backs, we will probably lose our excellent ESL aide of many years and more ESL/ELD instruction will be required of all classroom teachers.

As a goal for myself, I need to learn more about the Filipino culture and our Native Americans to add to my present cultural approach. The culturally diverse arena of the classroom is continually expanding and so must teachers' knowledge and understanding of the cultures so as to meet and validate each and everyone of our students.

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